

The John C. Stagg House
Sicomac Road above Cedar Hill Avenue
Wyckoff Township, Bergen County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

The John C. Stagg House
Sicomac Road above Cedar Hill Avenue
Wyckoff Township, Bergen County, New Jersey

Owner and occupant: William H. Mac Donald

Dates of Erection: Existing foundations of rebuilt
wing in or before 1747, main house 1762-1797

Architect: Unknown

Builders: Original unit (rebuilt wing) by Johannes
Stagg; main house by his son Cornelius Stagg
or grandson John C. Stagg

Present Condition: Good. The east wing was rebuilt
later of frame construction on original stone
foundation, dutch oven destroyed and floor
line raised to that of main house, says
present owner. Dormer windows not original.

Number of Stories: One and one-half over cellar

Materials of Construction:

Foundation - stone masonry

Exterior walls - main house has coursed
ashlar red sandstone west end wall to
eave line, semi-coursed rubble east
end and rear, plaster on stone front,
with cut stone quoins at all four
corners, and frame gable ends; the
minor wing of frame clapboarded

Interior walls - stone party walls and
frame partitions

Chimneys - brick, built into inside of
gable end walls

Floors - modern flooring over original
white pine planks on original hewn
oak and chestnut beams

Roofs - gable, wood shingled, original
hewn rafters

Historical Data:

The identification of this house by discovery of the name of its original owner has been a matter of deduction from the evidences provided by a search of the title through successive owners as recorded in the County archives, and is reported as follows:

Johannes Stagg, born about 1699 and died after 1748, eldest son of Jan Stagg (1674-1739) of New Barbadoes Neck (on the edge of Hackensack meadows, south of present Rutherford) Bergen County, married on 11 August 1722 Hendricktje Kousman, both being described in the record thereof in the register of the Reformed Dutch Church of Hackensack as born and living then in that parish, and as having been received as members on 13 April 1723. Evidently they settled between 1722 and 1747 some 12 miles northward of Hackensack, on a farm between the Ponds and Sicomac, but retained membership in that church as is indicated by the record of baptisms of their 10 children there from 1723 to 1747, since the nearer church at Paramus was without a minister from 1732 to 1748. Evidence of settlement in the region of the house here surveyed is the record of marriage of his daughter Neeltje Stagg, 16 April 1747, to Jacob Van Houten which states that she was born in Hackensack (1728) but was now living at the Ponds and that the man was born and living at the latter place also. By deed of 26 May 1748, Johannes Stagg conveyed to Peter Van Sile a tract of 49 acres on "the brook which comes out of Great Pond", now Franklin Lake, Bergen County.^(a) No record of probate on the estate of Johannes Stagg appears in the County archives now at Hackensack nor in the preceding ones now filed with the Secretary of State, so that the date of his death and the disposition of his real estate among his heirs has not been determined. But supposedly his real estate included the farm here considered, on Sicomac Road, and he transferred to his son Cornelius Stagg by deed the 50 acre tract mentioned hereafter,

(a) Wm. Nelson, History of the City of Paterson and the County of Passaic, New Jersey, 1901, pp. 191 et seq.; Register of Hackensack R.D. Ch. publ. 1891; N.J. archives XXX, 451).

unless the latter received it in a division thereof among the heirs. The existing foundation of the minor wing of the house here considered has been ascribed to him however, that unit having later been rebuilt.

By deed of 1st April 1797, Cornelius Stagg (b) and wife Margaret of Acquackanonk, Essex County, New Jersey, conveyed to (their eldest son) John C. Stagg of Franklin Township,* Bergen County, for 300 Pounds New York money, a 50 acre lot of land in the latter place, describing the boundary lines thereof as "Beginning at the Highway leading from Goffle to the Ponds (i.e. Sicomac Rd.), at the most southwest corner of a lot formerly conveyed by Simeon Van Winkle to Adam Van Order, from thence along the line of said Van Order north $47\frac{1}{2}$ degrees east 3.20 chains, thence north $42\frac{1}{2}$ degrees east 20.95 to the line of John Lozier, thence along his line until comes to the line of Albert Alyea, thence along his line as the fence now stands until it comes to the road from Alyea's House to the Highway, thence along said line to the road first mentioned and along the same to the place of beginning. (Bergen County Deed Book H2-189).

(b) Cornelius Stagg, bapt. 2 April 1738 (at Hackensack) 5th of the 7 sons of Johannes Stagg and wife Hendricktie Housman, mar. Margrietje Banta, widow of Peter J. Demarest,* bapt. 18 Oct. 1741, dau. of Jan Banta and wf. Sarah Demarest. He was born and brought up on the old homestead between Sicomac and Wyckoff, but in middle life he and his wife removed to Acquackanonk (Passaic) and resided with their son James before 9 Dec. 1787, the date of their being received as members of the church there by letter of transfer from that at Paramus. He d. before 24 May 1824, on which date admin. on his estate was granted to (his son) John C. Stagg. His children were: Johannes b. 14 Nov. 1762, prob. Cornelis, David bapt. 1 May 1766* (at Paramus), and James. (Wm. Nelson cited above). *If so, she was a 2nd wife and not the mother of his children, for on 3 Nov. 1771 Peter P. Demarest and wife Margrietje Banta had a daughter bapt. per Schraalenburgh Church register, L.D.C. Cf. T.M. Banta, The Banta Genealogy, 1893, pp. 44 and 79.

* Franklin Twp. was incorporated 1798, part of it set off as Hohokus Twp. 1849, as Ridgewood Twp. 1876, Midland Park 1894, and as Wyckoff Twp. after 1919.

By his will dated 4 July 1829 and proved 29 May 1830, this John C. Stagg of Franklin Township^(c) devised all of his real estate of his five sons, Isaac, John, Jacobus, William and Albert, and to his grandsons, the heirs of Cornelius J. Stagg, equally divided. By deed of 2 May 1831, his widow Cornelia, daughters Sarah Ackerson and Margaret Lake, sons Isaac, John, James and William and grandson John Stagg son of Cornelius J. Stagg decd., all of Bergen County, conveyed to his other son Albert Stagg of Franklin Township, for \$1460, "All that certain tract or parcel of land, situate in the Township of Franklin, Bergen County, known as the Homestead farm of John C. Stagg, deceased."

Albert Stagg who thus in 1831 came into full possession of the paternal homestead held the same until 1st September 1846, on which date he conveyed it by deed to Richard Terhune of New York City for \$3000. The latter evidently occupied the place, and in his will dated 1855 and proved 19 August 1859, in which he is described as of Franklin Township, Bergen County, orders his executors to sell any or all of his real estate as they find proper.

Accordingly, by deed of 10 July 1867 the said executors of Richard Terhune conveyed to Susan Fairchild, wife of Henry Fairchild of Paterson, New Jersey, for \$6000 the Stagg farm acquired in 1846 as above describing it as containing about 43 acres.

From the Fairchilds it passed to Nehemiah Millard^(d) of Brooklyn, New York, by deed of 15 February 1868 for \$8000, but was seized and conveyed to the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York by sheriff's deed of 10 November 1880 for \$2000 in foreclosure sale. This corporation transferred the property to James Dougherty and wife of Paterson on 30 June 1897, and they in turn to Florence Freestone of that city on 20 January 1919. Miss Freestone conveyed it to William H. Mac Donald and wife of East

(c) Johannes C. Stagg, b. 14 Nov. 1762, son of Cornelis Stagg and wf. Margrietje Banta, d. 13 May 1830, having mar. 16 Jan. 1783 Cornelia Van Blarcom, b. 11 Feb. 1757 at the Ponds, who d. 15 Jan. 1852. He lived in the old homestead at Sicomac. (Nelson, cited before).

(d) John Stek, now Stagg, settled back of Knickies Pond in 1711.* This is undoubtedly part of the Judge Millard Farm at Sicomac. Stagg and his descendants lived on this farm until about forty years ago. (W.W. Clayton, History of Bergen and Passaic Counties, New Jersey, 1882, p. 204).

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Rutherford, Bergen County, on 11 April following, as containing about 43 acres. Mr. Mac Donald remains as owner and occupant of the house at the time of our survey there in October 1940, its lot having a frontage of 150 feet on the northeast side of Sicomac Road, Wyckoff Township, and a depth of 280 feet. The balance of the tract was owned in 1928 by the Sicomac Realty Corporation.

Reference:

Search of title in the land and probate records of Bergen County by Joseph Benenati, H.A.B.S. abstractor, reported 12 December 1940

Lewis D. Cook
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.
District Officer

- * Impossibly Jan² Stagg (1674-1739) whose will describes him as of New Barbadoes Neck, but was probably Johannes³ Stagg (born ca. 1699 in Hackensack, mar. 1722 there and had 10 chldn. bapt. there 1723-1747) if he removed in or before the last year to Sicomac, but no probate of his estate appears on record by which to locate him. This Clayton statement is cited in Nelson^(a) but the word "settled" is changed to "bought". L.D.C.